IN THE CLAIMS:

All of the pending claims 3-7 and 10-18 are set forth below. Please AMEND claims 3-7 and 10-18 in accordance with the following:

1-2.   (cancelled)

3.   (currently amended) A method of predicting an initial input of a new product for predicting a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, ~~wherein~~comprising:

~~more than one people~~ numerically ~~evaluate~~ evaluating a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share, by more than one people; and

~~a structured neural network calculates~~calculating a sales volume or market share of said new product for each one of said people based on numerical values on said past products and said new products given by each one of said people with respect to said factors and actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, and ~~obtains~~obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, via a structured neural network, wherein

comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people are calculated based on the numerical values with respect to said factors, correlation coefficients are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, the sales volumes or market shares of said new product calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network are layered out based on the correlation coefficients for said more than one people, average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares of said new product in the respective layers are calculated, and

a sales volume or market share of said new product is predicted based on the average values and the confidence intervals for the respective layers, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

4.   (currently amended) A method of predicting an initial input of a new product for predicting a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, ~~wherein~~comprising:

~~more than one people~~ numerically ~~evaluate~~ evaluating a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share, by more than one people; and

~~a structured neural network calculates~~calculating a sales volume or market share of said

new product for each one of said people based on numerical values on said past products and said new products given by each one of said people with respect to said factors and actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, and ~~obtains~~ obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, via a structured neural network, wherein

comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people are calculated based on the numerical values with respect to said factors, relationships are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, the sales volumes or market shares of said new product are calculated for said more than one people based on the relationships and the comprehensive evaluations on said new product, and

a sales volume or market share of said new product is predicted based on the calculated sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

5.   (currently amended) A method of predicting an initial input of a new product as set forth in ~~Claim~~ claim 4, wherein the relationships between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products are calculated through regression analysis in which the comprehensive evaluations are used as a predictor variable and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares are used as a criterion variable.

6.   (currently amended) A method of predicting an initial input of a new product for predicting a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, ~~wherein~~comprising:
        ~~more than one people~~ numerically ~~evaluate~~ evaluating a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share, by more than one people; and
        ~~a structured neural network calculates~~calculating a sales volume or market share of said new product for each one of said people based on numerical values on said past products and said new products given by each one of said people with respect to said factors and actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, and ~~obtains~~obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, via a structured neural network, wherein

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comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people are calculated based on the numerical values with respect to said factors, correlation coefficients are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, relationships are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, the sales volumes or market shares of said new product are calculated for said more than one people based on the relationships and the comprehensive evaluations on said new product, the calculated sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people are layered out based on the correlation coefficients for said more than one people, average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares of said new product in the respective layers are calculated, and

a sales volume or market share of said new product is predicted based on the average values and the confidence intervals for the respective layers, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

7.   (currently amended) A method of predicting an initial input of a new product as set forth in ~~Claim~~ claim 6, wherein the relationships between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products are calculated through regression analysis in which the comprehensive evaluations are used as a predictor variable and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares are used as a criterion variable.

8-9.   (cancelled)

10.   (currently amended) A system for predicting an initial input of a new product which uses a method of predicting an initial input of a new product for predicting a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, ~~wherein~~comprising:

an evaluation unit, taking input data from more than one people, ~~and~~numerically evaluating a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share,; and

a structured neural network ~~calculates~~calculating a sales volume or market share of said new product for each one of said people based on numerical values on said past products and said new products given by each one of said people with respect to said factors and actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, and ~~obtains~~obtaining said factors

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contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, <u>wherein</u>

comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people are calculated based on the numerical values with respect to said factors, correlation coefficients are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, the sales volumes or market shares of said new product calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network are layered out based on the correlation coefficients for said more than one people, average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares of said new product in the respective layers are calculated, and

a sales volume or market share of said new product is predicted based on the average values and the confidence intervals for the respective layers, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

11.   (currently amended) A system for predicting an initial input of a new product which uses a method of predicting an initial input of a new product for predicting a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, ~~wherein~~<u>comprising</u>:

an evaluation unit<u>,</u> taking input data from more than one people<u>,</u> ~~and~~numerically evaluating a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share~~,~~<u>; and</u>

a structured neural network ~~calculates~~<u>calculating</u> a sales volume or market share of said new product for each one of said people based on numerical values on said past products and said new products given by each one of said people with respect to said factors and actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, and ~~obtains~~<u>obtaining</u> said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, <u>wherein</u>

comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people are calculated based on the numerical values with respect to said factors, relationships are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, the sales volumes or market shares of said new product are calculated for said more than one people based on the relationships and the comprehensive evaluations on said new product, and

a sales volume or market share of said new product is predicted based on the calculated sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

12.   (currently amended) The system for predicting an initial input of a new product as set forth in ~~Claim~~ claim 11, wherein the relationships between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products are calculated through regression analysis in which the comprehensive evaluations are used as a predictor variable and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares are used as a criterion variable.

13.   (currently amended) A system for predicting an initial input of a new product which uses a method of predicting an initial input of a new product for predicting a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, wherein

an evaluation unit, taking input data from more than one people, ~~and~~ numerically evaluating a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share~~,~~; and

a structured neural network ~~calculates~~ calculating a sales volume or market share of said new product for each one of said people based on numerical values on said past products and said new products given by each one of said people with respect to said factors and actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, and ~~obtains~~ obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitudes of said factors, wherein

comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people are calculated based on the numerical values with respect to said factors, correlation coefficients are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, relationships are calculated between the comprehensive evaluations by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, the sales volumes or market shares of said new product are calculated for said more than one people based on the relationships and the comprehensive evaluations on said new product, the calculated sales volume or market shares of said new product for said more than one people are layered out based on the correlation coefficients for said more than one people, average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares of said new product in the respective layers are calculated, and

a sales volume or market share of said new product is predicted based on the average values and the confidence intervals for the respective layers, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

14.	(currently amended) The system for predicting an initial input of a new product as set forth in ~~Claim~~ claim 13, wherein the relationships between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products are calculated through regression analysis in which the comprehensive evaluations are used as a predictor variable and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares are used as a criterion variable.

15.	(currently amended) A computer readable recording medium which stores a program for causing a computer to predict a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, said recording medium storing a program ~~including~~comprising:

a procedure for causing a computer to input data which are evaluations in the form of numerical values made by more than one people on a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors, including actual sales volume or actual market shares of said past products, which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share;

a procedure for causing a computer to calculate comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of the people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors;

a procedure for causing a computer to calculate correlation coefficients between said comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of the people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products;

a procedure for causing a computer to calculate relationships between said comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of the people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products;

a procedure for causing a computer to calculate the sales volumes or market shares of said new product for the more than one people, based on said relationships and said comprehensive evaluations on said new product;

a procedure for causing a computer to layer out the sales volumes or market shares of said new product calculated through said procedure for the more than one people, based on said correlation coefficients for the more than one people;

a procedure for causing a computer to calculate average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares for the respective layers which are created through said procedure; and

a procedure for causing a computer to output the average values and the confidence intervals in the respective layers calculated through said procedure.

16. (currently amended) A computer readable recording medium which stores a program for causing a computer to predict a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, said recording medium storing:

a program for causing a computer to execute a procedure for entering data which are evaluations in the form of numerical values made by more than one people on a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors, including actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share;

a ~~structured neural network which calculates~~program for causing a computer to calculate sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors given on said past products and said new product given by said more than one people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, said structured neural network obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, via a structured neural network; and

a program for causing a computer to execute ~~the following procedures which are~~:

a procedure of calculating comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors;

a procedure of calculating correlation coefficients between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products;

a procedure of layering the sales volumes or market shares of said new product calculated by said structured neural network for said more than one people, based on the correlation coefficients for said more than one people;

a procedure of calculating average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares for the respective layers which are created through said procedure; and

a procedure of outputting the average values and the confidence intervals in the respective layers calculated through said procedure, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

17. (currently amended) A computer readable recording medium which stores a program which causes a computer to predict a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, said recording medium storing:

a program for causing a computer to execute a procedure for entering data which are

evaluations in the form of numerical values made by more than one people on a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors, including actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share;

a ~~structured neural network which calculates~~program for causing a computer to calculate sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors given on said past products and said new product given by said more than one people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, said structured neural network obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, via a structured neural network; and

a program for causing a computer to execute ~~the following procedures which are~~:

a procedure of calculating comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors;

a procedure of obtaining relationships between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products;

a procedure of calculating the sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people based on the relationships and the comprehensive evaluations on said new product; and

a procedure of outputting the sales volumes or market shares of said new product calculated for said more than one people through said procedure, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.

18.   (currently amended) A computer readable recording medium which stores a program which causes a computer to predict a sales volume or market share at the launch of a new product, said recording medium storing:

a program for causing a computer to execute a procedure for entering data which are evaluations in the form of numerical values made by more than one people on a plurality of past products and said new product, with respect to a plurality of factors, including actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, which are considered to influence a sales volume or market share;

a ~~structured neural network which calculates~~program for causing a computer to calculate sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors given on said past products and said new product

given by said more than one people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products, said structured neural network obtaining said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors, via a structured neural network; and

a program for causing a computer to execute the following procedures which are:

a procedure of calculating comprehensive evaluations on said past products and said new products for each one of said people based on the numerical values with respect to said factors;

a procedure of calculating correlation coefficients between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products;

a procedure of obtaining relationships between the comprehensive evaluations on said past products by each one of said people and the actual sales volumes or actual market shares of said past products;

a procedure of calculating the sales volumes or market shares of said new product for said more than one people, based on the relationships and the comprehensive evaluations on said new product;

a procedure of layering the sales volumes or market shares of said new product calculated through said procedure for said more than one people, based on the correlation coefficients for said more than one people;

a procedure of calculating average values and confidence intervals of the sales volumes or market shares for the respective layers which are created through said procedure; and

a procedure of outputting the average values and the confidence intervals in the respective layers, the sales volumes or market shares calculated for said more than one people by said structured neural network, and said factors contributing to the calculation and the magnitude of said factors.